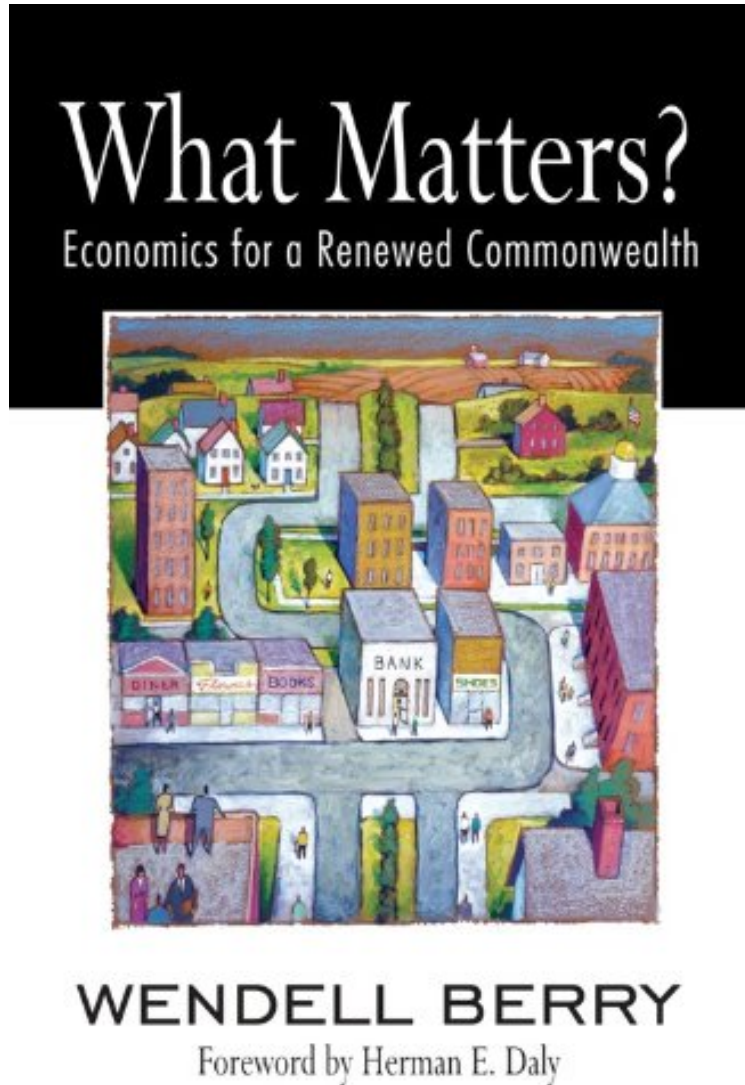


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What Matters?: Economics for a Renewed Commonwealth

Wendell Berry

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Wendell Berry : What Matters?: Economics for a Renewed Commonwealth before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What Matters?: Economics for a Renewed Commonwealth:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good introduction to Berry's thoughts; Poor print quality
By JWR
There are two parts to this review, the content of the book and the physical quality of book I received:
Content- I'm fairly new to reading Wendell Berry, and this book has served as a good introduction to his thoughts on community life through the years. There are recent essays, and those from several decades ago. Berry is a brilliant critic of modern economic and community life. He holds a mirror up to American society and demands that we look at

ourselves more critically, with a hope that we might be renewed. Physical quality of the book I received - I'm not sure what happened with this printer, but the book I received was actually cut wrong. Pages were not fully cut apart, requiring me to actually read with a knife in hand to separate pages. The book itself was not even cut in the shape of a rectangle with right-angle corners, but a slight parallelogram. The text is printed at a slight angle on the page. It's not unreadable, but I wonder what happened to quality control at this printer...or if they even cared.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Stewardship of what we can use By Ouida Myers Berry provides a thoughtful look at how we use and misuse what we have locally and its impact. For example, local farmers were bought out by large corporate agricultural companies. This displaced farmers and overused the land. How would the impact be different if a harmful product was used on a small farm instead of a conglomerate? What if lumber was managed by landowners to minimize deforestation?

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Common Sense, Prophetic Wisdom By R. C. Upon finishing this book, I read it a second time and expect to read it again in the future. Wendell Berry writes with the simplicity, modesty, and common sense of the dedicated farmer he is and with the wisdom of the Judeo-Christian and other religious and literary traditions in which he has steeped himself over many years of reading, writing, and teaching. Some readers, myself included, may feel that his agrarian, ecological ideals have little chance of full enactment in our world driven by capitalistic theory and corporate compulsions. Yet these ideals provide him a high vantage point from which to recognize and cogently dissect the shortcomings and dangers of our present economic and political system. To get a better idea of the richness and cogency of the book, try reading first the introduction by economist Herman Daly and then the last chapter, "The Total Economy." Then start over.

Over the years, Wendell Berry has sought to understand and confront the financial structure of modern society and the impact of developing late capitalism on American culture. There is perhaps no more demanding or important critique available to contemporary citizens than Berry's writings — just as there is no vocabulary more given to obfuscation than that of economics as practiced by professionals and academics. Berry has called upon us to return to the basics. He has traced how the clarity of our economic approach has eroded over time, as the financial asylum was overtaken by the inmates, and citizens were turned from consumers — entertained and distracted — to victims, threatened by a future of despair and disillusion. For this collection, Berry offers essays from over the last 25 years, alongside new essays about the recent economic collapse, including "Money Versus Goods" and "Faustian Economics," treatises of great alarm and courage. He offers advice and perspective that should be heeded by all concerned as our society attempts to steer from its present chaos and recession to a future of hope and opportunity. With urgency and clarity, Berry asks us to look toward a true sustainable commonwealth, grounded in realistic Jeffersonian principles applied to our present day.

From Booklist The bulk of Berry's new essay collection consists of older pieces, mostly from two out-of-print books, which complement the five new pieces in tone and substance. They are, altogether, the reasoned and insistent exhortations of a man with a cause who, rather than mellowing with age and wisdom, continues to grow in forcefulness and vision. The main thrust of the book is the proper ordering of economics, so that it addresses common human realities instead of the demands of financial systems. To support stable communities, from the household to the nation, economics should put nature foremost ("Virtually nobody," Berry complains, "regards nature as an economic resource"), succeeded by land use, manufacturing, and consumption, in a four-part structure of valuation. Unsurprisingly to those who have followed Berry's half-century of writing, reverence and stewardship are key qualities of spirit for such an economy. Moreover, like the great mid-twentieth-century cultural critic Paul Goodman, whom Berry acknowledges here, Berry proposes an agenda of concrete changes in agricultural policy to enable the reordered economy he so cogently describes. Invaluable counsel. --Ray Olson Praise for *What Matters?* "The reasoned and insistent exhortations of a man with a cause who, rather than mellowing with age and wisdom, continues to grow in forcefulness and vision." —Booklist Praise for *Sex, Economy, Freedom Community* "Read it with pencil in hand, make notes, and hope that somehow our country and the world will soon come to see the truth that is told here." —The New York Times Book "Berry once again carves out a unique position in American social debate: not liberal (he hates big government), not conservative (he hates big corporations), not libertarian (he would balance individual rights with those of the commonwealth), but always sharp-tongued and aglow with common sense." —Kirkus